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A “PEA” IN THE POD

NEW MEDICAL DEVICE CALLED THE “PEA POD,” IS PROVEN TO BE AN EFFECTIVE TOOL IN MEASURING TOTAL BODY FAT IN NEWBORN BABIES

New York, NY (March 20, 2007) There was no hiding body fat for the forty-eight two-day old babies who are part of an ongoing study being performed at St. Luke’s and Roosevelt Hospitals, which involved the use of a new medical device called the “PeaPod,” designed to measure total body fat in infants.

Dr. Dympna Gallagher, Director of the Body Composition Unit at St. Luke’s New York Obesity Research Center and co-investigator of the study says, “Understanding what constitutes normal body fat composition in healthy newborns is important when linking early infancy body fat with long-term health outcomes. For example, are newborn babies with higher body fat composition more prone to develop cardiovascular problems as adults? Traditionally, the range in body fat at birth in healthy newborns is determined by measuring skin fold thicknesses. However, in this study we are using the PeaPod to measure body fat in newborns in addition to the skinfold method and have found thus far that sex differences in total body fat are detectable at birth using the PeaPod but were not detectable using skinfolds.”

About the Pea Pod:

Similar to the BodPod used to measure body fat in adults and older children, the “crib-sized” PeaPod uses the same advanced air displacement technology to measure total body fat percentages. The baby is placed in a pressure controlled Pea Pod crib. The PeaPod measures the volume of space the baby occupies and contains a precise scale for

measuring body weight. The baby's body volume and body weight is then calculated to determine the baby's body density, which in turn is linked to the amount of body fat. Dr. Charles Paley, an attending pediatrician at Roosevelt Hospital and co-investigator of the study says, "The PeaPod allowed us to measure body fat amongst babies of different ethnic backgrounds, male and female. This poses an interesting question -- Are the racial and gender differences in body fat composition already apparent in children at birth? In the future, by following patients over an extended period of time, we hope to have an answer to that question."

If you would like to interview Drs. Gallagher and Paley and parents of a newborn patient who will be using the PeaPod, please contact Michelle Pipia-Stiles at 212/523-4044 or Elizabeth Dowling at 212/523-4047, so that the necessary arrangements can be made.

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